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TAGS: [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [US](#)

SUBJECT: TURKEY: GOT CONSIDERING ECONOMIC SANCTIONS ON KRG

REF: ANKARA 2624 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: PolCouns Janice G. Weiner for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (S/NF) SUMMARY: Turkey's National Security Council (NSC) recommended on October 24 that the GOT implement economic sanctions against groups supporting the PKK. The NSC's recommendation will be taken up by the cabinet in due course. Military operations in the border region of Hakkari Province in SE Turkey continue, including efforts to recover the eight Turkish soldiers taken hostage by the PKK during its October 21 attack. Widespread press reporting of cross-border attacks by Turkish warplanes and large-scale movements of Turkish forces into the southeast, however, remain unconfirmed both by Turkish military sources as well as through other means. The Turkish media are also focused on what are perceived as contradictory statements emanating from Iraqi Kurdish leaders regarding the degree to which they are willing to assist Turkey with the PKK problem. While large protests against terrorism continue across the nation, there have been only a few small demonstrations at mission facilities, with Turkish police responding quickly to provide additional security as necessary. END SUMMARY

GOT To Consider Economic Sanctions Against KRG

12. (SBU) Turkey's National Security Council met October 24 for six and one-half hours to discuss the ongoing crisis involving the nation's struggle against PKK terrorism. This was the first meeting of the NSC since Abdullah Gul's assumption of the Presidency, and brought together all of Turkey's senior security leaders, including the President, Prime Minister, Ministers of Defense and Interior, the Chief of the Turkish General Staff, and chiefs of each of the armed services, among others. The primary recommendation the NSC made to the cabinet regarding how the government should respond to the most recent PKK attacks was that Turkey should implement "economic measures" against "groups maintaining direct or indirect support to the separatist terror organization in the region." PM Erdogan had previewed this

during his October 23 UK trip.

13. (C) Such a provision, should the cabinet agree to implement it, is likely to take the form of some sort of embargo on the Kurdish Regional Government authority. GOT officials have pointedly not said specifically what that might entail, but Turkish media speculation has touched upon the closure of Turkey's Habur Gate crossing into Iraq, cutting back on electricity exports to northern Iraq, and stopping the export of everyday commodities. Closing Habur Gate would not cut off Turkish exports to Iraq altogether. Rather, Turkey would move to direct its exports to Iraq via the Nusaybin gate in Mardin Province, opposite Al-Qamichli in Syria, and transport goods through northeastern Syria directly into Nineva Province in Iraq. Such an arrangement would cut off a large source of revenue the KRG accrues through the transit of traffic through the Ibrahim Khalil gate in Duhok Province, opposite Habur Gate.

Turkish Media Condemns Iraqi Kurdish Leaders' Contradictory Statements

14. (C) Turkish dailies focused on apparently inconsistent statements by Iraqi Kurdish leaders, especially President Talabani and KRG president Massoud Barzani. Media pointed to statements attributed to Talabani as contradictory and noted that the Iraqis and Northern Iraqi Kurds remain unconvinced of the need to take concrete action against the PKK. They cite Talabani's claim that Iraq and the KRG would "never hand a Kurdish man over to Turkish authorities," contrasted with reported commitments he made to FM Babacan on October 23 to

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extradite PKK terrorists to Turkey. This is further compared with Talabani's statement that PKK leadership does not exist in Kurdish cities, but rather in their mountain stronghold, making it impossible for Iraqi and KRG officials to arrest and hand them over to Turkey. They point as well to Barzani's oft-repeated public pronouncements that the PKK is not a terrorist organization. They point out that he appeared to contradict himself with his declaration that the KRG does not accept the use of Iraqi territory by any organization that threatens the security of neighboring countries. The end result, commentators note, is that Turkey no longer trusts what Iraqi Kurdish leaders say; at this juncture, only concrete actions will matter.

15. (U) On October 25, a court lifted the ban on media coverage of the October 21 terrorist attacks, concluding that the limits proposed under the measure were not clear. In any event, no one in the press appears to have heeded the ban.

Counter Insurgency Ops Continue...No Sign Large-Scale CBO Is Imminent

16. (S/NF) Turkish security forces continue to operate along the Turkey-Iraq border as they have in the days since the October 21 attacks. Turkish media accounts claim Turkish F-4s, F-16s, and Cobra helicopters took off from Diyarbakir airport and bombed PKK shelters/encampments as far as 30-50 kilometers inside Iraq on October 24. There are also media reports that 300 Turkish troops crossed as far as 10 kilometers over the border and attacked PKK camps in Zap, Ava, and Avashin before returning to Turkey, while the military also struck with artillery or other means PKK locations in Zap, Hakurki, Hinere, Lolan, and Metina. Many media accounts characterize all of these elements as "preparations for a cross border operation" (CBO). Turkish military and government sources have not confirmed any of these reports, nor do we have confirmation through other means that Turkish fixed wing aircraft have actually entered Iraqi airspace. It is possible that such media accounts are being used both to show the Turkish public that military retaliation is taking place, while concurrently making clear

to KRG and Iraqi authorities that the threat of Turkish military action is real.

Efforts to Recover Hostages Ongoing

¶7. (S/NF) While the Turkish military continues to carry out operations focused on locating and recovering the eight soldiers taken hostage by the PKK, several behind-the-scenes initiatives are ongoing in an effort to secure their release.

Demonstrations Continue Nationwide

¶8. (U) Demonstrations against the PKK continue throughout the country. Media reports indicated thousands -- in some cases tens of thousands -- participated in marches in Elazig, Mardin, Kars, Samsun, Corum, Hatay, Bolu, Kirklareli, Edirne, Erzurum, Yozgat, Bingol, Canakkale, Karaman, Burdur, Mugla, Aydin, Adana, Van, Artvin, Kirkkale, Eskisehir, and Ankara. The Ankara demonstration, which was peaceful, was in the thousands, considerably reduced in numbers from the previous days. Demonstrations in Samsun, Kars, and Corum reportedly included anti-U.S. references, while at an Izmir university campus, students carried signs reading "America killed our soldiers" and "the U.S. is behind the PKK."

Mission Security Remains Unchanged

¶9. (SBU) Occasional, informal protests in front of Mission

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facilities have occurred. An unaffiliated group of nine individuals from Corum Province briefly protested outside the Embassy, mid-day October 25. Carrying signs stating "No to U.S. Products" and "No to U.S. Support of Terrorism," the group chanted for ten minutes before disbursing. On October 24, a group of several hundred demonstrators gathered spontaneously in the central Ankara neighborhood of Kizilay during lunch and for several hours afterward. Today,s group has only reached several hundred. A demonstration organized by the Nationalist Action Party's youth wing, planned to take place October 24 in front of the Consulate in Istanbul, did not materialize. We have no specific information regarding additional demonstrations, but expect spontaneous gatherings to continue. Turkish National Police continue to provide supplemental security support at all mission facilities.

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